



# Arnold Herbert Colodny



Arnold Herbert Colodny died June 15, 2001, in his 77th year. He was a highly respected and beloved pediatric surgeon at Children's Hospital and a Clinical Professor of Surgery at Harvard Medical School.

Dr. Colodny was born in Burlington, Vermont. He received the B.S. degree *magna cum laude* from the University of Vermont in 1948, where he was first in his class, and in 1952 the M.D. degree *cum laude*, from the University of Vermont College of Medicine. He did a surgical internship at the University of Minnesota, and then returned to Boston to complete a surgical residency at the Boston City Hospital from 1954 to 1959. In 1959 he was accepted to be a senior resident in surgery in Dr. Robert Gross' department at Children's Hospital Medical Center in Boston. During this residency he met and married Lillian Hill. In 1961, after he had completed training in pediatric surgery, Dr. Colodny was accorded the unique honor of being invited by Dr. Robert Gross to join the surgical staff at Children's Hospital. Dr. Gross rarely asked his graduating surgical residents to stay on the surgical staff, believing instead, that they should take positions at other children's hospitals to strengthen the field of pediatric

surgery. However, Gross recognized that Colodny was an exceptionally fine surgeon, and in his quiet and meticulous manner, much like Dr. Gross himself.

Anomalies of the genito-urinary tract are among the most common of all congenital anomalies. Babies with these anomalies frequently require urgent surgery soon after birth, and in many cases, additional operations during childhood. Until the late 1960s these surgical procedures were performed mainly by pediatric surgeons and occasionally by urologists whose main interest was adults. However, in the late 1960s, Dr. Alan Perlmutter moved from the world of adult urology at the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital to concentrate on pediatric urology at Children's Hospital, where a genito-urinary clinic began to flourish. At the same time, Dr. Colodny saw the need for specialized care of these young patients by a pediatric surgeon, and

worked closely with Perlmutter. When Dr. Perlmutter left Boston to become chief of urology at Detroit Children's Hospital, Dr. Judah Folkman, Surgeon-in-Chief, appointed Arnold Colodny to be director of the genito-urinary clinic at Children's, and in 1974 to be Acting Chief of the Division of Urology at the Hospital, a position he held for the next three years. During this period, he pioneered improvements in surgical techniques for removing bladder diverticula; reported a new method for construction of ileal loops as replacements for dysfunctional bladders; improved the management of children with neurogenic bladders; and with Dr. Thorne Griscom in the department of radiology at Children's developed a radiological method of detecting neonatal urinary ascites resulting from obstruction of the urinary system or leakage from it.

When Folkman recruited Dr. Alan Retik from the Floating Hospital to become chief of the division of urology, his assistant, Dr. Stuart Bauer, came with him. Arnold Colodny was named Associate Director of the Division of Urology. Together, they built the most outstanding pediatric urological center in the world, and it became a separate Department in the hospital. Its laboratories are outstanding, and very well funded by NIH grants. This is just one of Arnold Colodny's legacies.

He also became known as one of the most outstanding mentors among surgeons who care for children. When graduates of the surgical and urological residency programs at Children's Hospital returned to Boston to give a lecture, or for a reunion, they would recall that when they were faced with a very sick child with a puzzling diagnosis, or a difficult situation in the operating room, they would ask themselves, "What would Dr. Colodny do?" He was the surgeon's surgeon.

He was admired and beloved by his patients and their parents. They knew him as a consummate and meticulous surgeon, but he was also their doctor who visited their bedside early in the morning and late at night, who often changed their dressings himself, and introduced them to his residents. To all of us who worked with him, he was a revered colleague.

Arnold loved fishing and boating, and he and Lillian shared many a trip in his Boston whaler. Lillian always traveled with him to the various annual surgical meetings, and together they often entertained students, residents and colleagues in their home.

In 1990, Dr. Colodny was honored by the University of Vermont as an outstanding alumnus with the Award for Distinguished Academic Achievement. In 1996, a visiting lectureship was established in his name at the University of Vermont.

Dr. Arnold Colodny is survived by his wife Lillian, their sons Craig and Eric, and their daughter Lisa, and four grandchildren. His exemplary life and career have left a memorable legacy to his family, friends, and fellow surgeons.

Respectfully submitted,

Judah Folkman